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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS OF SECURITY IN BASRAH

REF: A) BASRAH 49 B) BASRAH 65 C) BASRAH 81

CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah,  
Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b)

11. (C) On July 3, the Regional Coordinator (RC) met with Hassan al-Rashid, leader of Badr Organization in Basrah and a member of the Basrah Provincial Council (BPC). Al-Rashid discussed the migration of Sunni families from the Zubair and Al Khassib areas because of threats and intimidation and told the RC that a group of Sunni and Shia leaders had met to promote unity and address the mass departure of the Sunni population. (Note: Despite frequent inquiries to REO contacts, this is the first that we have heard of a Sunni-Shia group that is trying to forestall the exodus of Sunni families. End Note.) Besides citing the existence of such a group, al-Rashid could not give many specifics on the members and their activities.

12. (C) Al-Rashid tied the threats against the Sunnis to the security situation in Basrah. He opined that the situation has improved since the Prime Minister declared the State of Emergency in Basrah on May 1, but believes that the Iraqi Police Service (IPS) is the weakest link. Al-Rashid said that he had heard of a new Baghdad security plan for Basrah that would include participation by both the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces, but did not know more details. In an aside after discussing Governor al-Wa'eli's role in the security plan, the RC asked about oft-reported plans (Refs B, C, and previous) for the BPC to vote the governor out. Al-Rashid said that it is now a dead issue and he expects the governor to remain in office until the provincial election. The reason the governor was not ousted, he said, was because some BPC members had been directly threatened and were too frightened to vote al-Wa'eli out.

13. (C) The RC met with the governor's brother, Ismail al-Wa'eli, on July 2 to discuss security in Basrah (see Ref. A for more on Ismail al-Wa'eli). In a disjointed and rambling conversation, Ismail admitted many people thought he was behind political assassinations in Basrah, but professed his innocence and blamed this "false impression" on his numerous disputes with people in many political parties. He expressed frustration that he is always the number one suspect for assassinations and blamed Badr and SCIRI for many of the killings. When asked about the intimidation and assassination of Sunnis and the REO's local staff, Ismail said that the British knew who were behind the killings but were not doing anything about it. He told the RC that aside from the assassinations, the Governor was doing a good job with the security plan even without the support of the IPS or Chief of Police. He described his future plans as being apolitical and focusing on humanitarian work.

14. (C) Comment: Hassan al-Rashid, a politician who is very careful with his words, was even more circumspect in this meeting. He spoke in broad generalities, did not provide specific information and, quite frankly, simply seemed to be

meeting to keep up contact with the REO. (Note: in the previous five days he also had met with the British Consul General and the British military.) Al-Rashid was resigned to Governor al-Wa'eli retaining the governorship. The meeting with Ismail al-Wa'eli was a farrago of names and events as he spewed out "suspects" in the murders and related his relationship to various people at different points in his life.

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